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A Memorial of Jonathan Hutchinson

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31
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° A MEMORIAL

OF

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON,

LATE OF GEDNEY,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TOGETHER WITH A

FEW FRAGMENTS OF A RELIGIOUS NATURE

FOUND AFTER HIS DECEASE.

LONDON:

E. FRY AND SON, BISHOPSGATE STREET.

1839.

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February 3, 1942

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SHORTLY after the decease of his dear Friend and Brother, JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, the Editor of the following pages, observed with much satisfaction, a willingness to lay some of the Writings of that valuable individual before the Public.

Since that time, he has waited long for the appearance of others, which he believes would have been gladly received by many, who entertain a lively recollection of his pious and exemplary life. He has, however, been disappointed ; and not feeling satisfied any longer to withhold what little is in his own possession, he ventures to commit it to the Press, with a sincere desire, that under the Divine Blessing, it may conduce to the spiritual improvement, and lasting benefit of his Readers.

Spalding, 15th of 4th mo. 1839.

WILLIAM MASSEY.

N.B.—By desire of the Editor, this Tract is printed of a suitable size for binding with the “Brief Notice, of Jonathan Hutchinson,” already published by JOHN BURTT.

A MEMORIAL, &c.

MANY having left behind them sketches of their own biography for the information of survivors, I am thereby encouraged to attempt the following outline of mine.

I was born at Gedney, in the county of Lincoln, on the seventh of the second month 1760, where, as I have been informed, my ancestors had resided for many generations, in the outward occupation of farmers ;—the only business that I ever followed. It also appears that a part of the family from which I was descended, joined the religious society of Friends pretty soon after its rise.

But though thus inheriting the privileges of rural retirement, and the simplicity of pastoral life—educated too in the principles of an excellent Christian profession, yet that interesting and dangerous portion of my life, between leaving school and manhood was strongly characterized by the sins and the follies, to which youth and inexperience are so peculiarly liable ;—whilst its succeeding stages, even the most happy and favoured of them, have in my own view at least, been remarkable for their weakness,

unworthiness, and vicissitude—so much so, that throughout the whole of my probationary course, there have been certain critical and eventful periods wherein my sufferings of body and mind, have been such, as to leave me but just in possession of life and sense. Yet on this solemn retrospect, I find nothing to complain of but fallen *self*, acted upon by a delusive world, and an unwearied spiritual adversary.

I, therefore, would not “charge God foolishly,” seeing that, in all, and through all, His kindness and forbearance towards me have been extended in a manner equally *unmerited* and *incomprehensible* to my own understanding; and which, like many other parts of His government, both in nature and grace, appears to admit of no other possible solution than is to be found in this scriptural declaration, that “the ways of the Lord are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.”

I do not remember having been favoured in my early years with the tendering visitations of Divine Love, either so often, or so powerfully, as we find is recorded of divers religious persons;—but I seem rather to have been left to explore in much solitude the depth and the misery of fallen nature in its greatest bitterness: so that before I had attained the twentieth year of my age, the enemy of all good possessed a fearful ascendancy over me:—but whilst, in many instances, he held me “captive at his will;”

yet as in the case of poor Job, his power was limited ; and he was not permitted, as was evidently his design, to complete the destruction both of my body and soul, which by the interposing arm of Israel's God, were mercifully preserved, and marvellously delivered from the last effort of his cruel and malignant grasp.

For after many sore and ineffectual conflicts, in which *Hope*, at length had taken its departure, I was favoured with so convincing an evidence, that God desireth not the death of a sinner, as strongly inclined my heart towards a state of subjection and obedience to Him :—but though thus made willing, the performances of my apprehended duty have ever been so poor and humiliating, as to give me occasion with deep feeling to respond to this language of David—“ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.” Amen and Amen ! saith a soul which thou hast indeed brought out of an horrible pit, and taught to sing thy praise therefore !

The first *vocal* prayer I remember having uttered, was extorted from me by distress, when in a kneeling attitude. I was preparing to cut some hay for cattle. The purport of it may serve to show the darkness and doubt of the heart from which it burst, like water from the rock, when smitten by the rod of Moses ;—it was brief, being comprehended in these few emphatic words—“ If there be a God in

heaven, I pray thee help me !” At another time, when sorely oppressed by mental affliction, I almost involuntary exclaimed, “ What must I do to be rid of this load of distress ?” to which I immediately received this intelligible answer, “ Thou must use the plain language, *thee and thou* to a single person,” a practice from which I had unhappily departed—I say *unhappily*, because my sufferings for unfaithfulness to such peculiarities of my religious profession, were often very acute from a full persuasion that this unfaithfulness was a denial of Christ before men, for which, if I persisted in it, he would also deny me “ before his Father and the Holy Angels.” Consonant with this impression, I cannot, nor ever desire to forget the pang that once pierced my heart on being asked if I was a Quaker ? which I suppose my conduct and conversation had rendered equivocal. At length, the “ messenger of the covenant suddenly came to his temple ”—for as I was travelling alone on the highway, without either expecting such a thing, or even thinking about it, in an *instant* the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit was prepared within me, and without allowing time for any *deliberate*, or even *conscious* exercise of the understanding, this ejaculation accompanied by a flood of tears, escaped from my lips. Lord grant that a poor fugitive may enter into thy rest ! to which (and I introduce his holy name with reverence,) the compassionate Jesus replied,—“ Thou

hast not merited the *good* things of this life, but thou hast deserved the evil things; wherefore be humble in prosperity, and in adversity patient, in *both* preserving an equal mind." "When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, for the *rebellious* also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."—"If thou diest *now*, thy children will be left above want, therefore, whether thou gain another shilling or not, endeavour to know the will of God and do it."

- “ I think it is not presumptuous to believe that the first verses in the first chapter to the Hebrews, as it relates to communion with Christ, is applicable to the Gospel dispensation, from its commencement, to its final consummation. “ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days *spoken* unto us by his *Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.” These intimations were communicated to me by the short sentences, and in the order wherein I have placed them, and I think nearly verbatim; for the occasion was too impressive, and has been too often recurred to in times of difficulty and danger, to put me in much hazard of misplacing a single word: and it can scarcely fail to be observed how much the language altogether was calculated to *calm a troubled, cheer a desponding, and instruct a bewildered* mind—weary and heavy

laden, as mine might truly be denominated. This singular proof of condescending goodness to one who, as probably many others have done, considers himself among the chief of sinners, and consequently as no *common* monument of divine and long-suffering mercy :—

I say, the blessed visitation here alluded to, took place in returning from a quarterly meeting at Lincoln, between the village of Heckington and a place called Garwick, about noon upon the longest day, the 21st of the 6th month, in the year 1804 :—and it is thus circumstantially recorded for the benefit and comfort of the *prodigal*, the *rebellious*, the *broken hearted*, and the variously *tribulated* and *afflicted* portions of the Lord's *rational*, yet often *erring* children.—May *all these* be encouraged to “pray without ceasing, and not to faint,” assuredly believing, that although they may have been cast into the “deeps,”—or have wandered as into a “far country” where *Famine* prevails, and *Destruction* threatens them, yet even from thence, if they sincerely seek a return to their heavenly Father's house, He will not only receive them with open arms, but will even meet them on their way.

As these few lines are not intended to meet any other eye, until those of the writer are closed in death, he hopes they will be no otherwise understood than as affording additional testimony, to that of a cloud of witnesses, that unto the Lord our

God belong “mercies and forgivenesses,” but unto *us* “shame and confusion of face.”—The *latter* consideration should keep us meek and lowly in heart, while the *former* may preserve us from despair. And should anything herein contained, appear too remarkable to obtain general credence, I can only answer in the language occasionally addressed by our blessed Redeemer to the doubting multitudes, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” or “He that can receive it, let him receive it.”

If but one poor mind may be consoled or benefited, I shall not have written in vain ; and for the rest, I can leave it where I believe we must leave all our labours, to the consciences of Men, and to “Him who judgeth righteously.”

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON.

12th mo. 10th, 1833.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE following "Fragments" are thought to be deserving of insertion in this place. They would have been accompanied by others of a similar kind, but for the circumstance of a large portion of the writings of the deceased having been already forwarded to a friend for publication, who (perhaps from unavoidable circumstances,) has not yet put them in print.

Amongst the various endeavours employed by this pious individual to serve the cause of truth, and to promote the welfare of his fellow professors, was his affectionate attention to such young people, as by servitude, or apprenticeship, were brought within the sphere of his acquaintance. The consistent conduct and true happiness of such, lay near to his heart; and to one of these, a young man of education and talent, but who had unhappily deviated from the path of self-denial, the letter at page 14, of the Fragments was addressed.

With the exception of two or three, which were simply observations made in his own family, and carefully taken down at the time, the remainder consists of private minutes, and a few extracts from some of his letters.

SOME RELIGIOUS FRAGMENTS,

*&c. &c.**Gedney, 16th of 5th mo. 1789.*

Dear Friend,

Although I would gladly pay the tenderest regard to thy feelings, and should be very unwilling unnecessarily to awaken in thy bosom the smallest sensation of pain, yet amongst divers considerations and reflections which have arisen in my mind from the affecting change thou hast so recently experienced, some remain with me with such weight, and appear to be so full of profitable instruction to myself, that I believe I shall be most satisfied simply to communicate them to thee, from a desire not to withhold anything from thee which may have the least tendency to strengthen or encourage thy mind.

I may first mention, that a sincere value for the object whom thou laments, (the loss of whose agreeable and useful society I believe many sensibly feel) together with my sympathy with thee, in a trial so nearly resembling what I have had to pass through,* have melted me down once more in the "furnace of affliction." This I am not ashamed to acknowledge, seeing it is a situation in which the Lord has declared (and my own experience of his tender regard

* See page 10 of a Brief Notice of J. H's Life and Character.

to such a state, has sealed to me the truth of the declaration) that he sometimes makes choice of his servants and people ; no doubt from its being so favourable to his gracious designs respecting us, which are our thorough sanctification and purification ; and it seems to be very justly compared to a furnace, as herein our minds become susceptible, and that stubbornness of will which is so desirous of choosing its own way, and is so apt to repel and evade the strokes of divine conviction, becomes subjected : and a passive submission is wrought in us to take any form that it may please the great workman to give us, and to be inscribed with that mark which he puts upon every vessel of his house, even "Holiness to the Lord."

That which next occurs to me, is a passage, the application and opening whereof on a solemn occasion, still fresh in thy memory, I thought might have excused my saying anything upon it ; but the manner in which it had some days before that time passed through my mind, together with the impression it still makes, induces me to revive it ; it is that exhortation of our blessed Lord to his lamenting followers at the time of his crucifixion, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." He was about to make the happy exchange of this world, which had indeed been to him a painful pilgrimage, for the mansions of eternal glory. No cause of sorrow on *his* account, but *they* were to be still left in a state of being, in which

their own infirmities and the wiles of an unwearied Adversary, would subject them to continual dangers, which would be a lively source of grief to *them*.

With respect to the Deceased, my own feelings, confirmed by the concurring testimonies of those whom I esteem before myself, convince me that there is no need to weep. I believe she is at rest : and the exercise of my mind occasioned by her removal, has been at times directed into another channel and towards other objects ; not only to mourn for those who are unhappily gone into that spiritual captivity from whence they “never shall return,” but I have also been led into an ardent travail for some, who I humbly trust have known a being redeemed out of the house of bondage, and have made some good advances towards the promised land ; and in a particular manner for myself and for thee, that we may be enabled to hold on our way through all opposition, that we may so run the race set before us not as uncertainly, and so combat the various trials and temptations that may be permitted to befall us, not as beating the air ; but rather like those who are contending for a prize immortal, which we shall assuredly receive if we faint not.

In the renewal of that tender affection which at this time I feel to flow towards thee, I am engaged to desire that it may please Him who beholdeth the afflictions of his children, to unite us in that purest of friendships the fellowship of the Gospel : thereby making us as brethren in the household of

faith, and so to cause all things to work together for our good, that at the end of time we may be prepared to join the happy inhabitants of those regions into which nothing that is impure or of a defiled nature can ever be admitted.

9th of 2nd mo. 1808.

Dear R.

Not having had much opportunity of conversation with thee for many weeks past, I feel inclined to address thee in this way; just to express the affectionate solicitude, with which thou hast at times been brought to my mind; and more especially in the course of that lingering complaint where-with thou hast for some time past been visited; which I doubt not has been the cause of considerable bodily suffering, and I would also willingly hope has proved a season (as I believe such visitations are mercifully designed to be) of profitable reflection and mental improvement; and that thou mayest under the impressions derived from it, be more inclined than at any former period of thy life, to consider the extreme mutability of all sublunary enjoyments, and in the beautiful and emphatic language of Holy writ, be disposed so to number the residue of thy days as to apply thine heart unto wisdom.

Few, and fleeting are the days allotted to man upon earth, and beyond all calculation uncertain! This is a truth which the experience of almost every

day tends to convince us of; but which from its frequent recurrence, I have thought is too apt to escape that observation which its nature demands; but, it is sometimes brought so home to us, as to *arrest* our wandering minds and as it were *command* our serious attention. The late sudden and unexpected removal of my dear companion, the affectionate parent of a young and helpless offspring, affords an awful instance of this kind; may it not preach unavailingly;—mayest thou, may I, and all who are acquainted with the affecting circumstance, be excited by it to use all diligence to make our calling and election sure; and with an ardour and sincerity proportioned to the importance of the object, endeavour by unreserved obedience to manifested duty, to be prepared for that awful summons from works to rewards, from which nothing can exempt us, and which is often sent in a most unlooked for (may it not prove to any of us an unprepared) hour to the habitations of youth and of vigour, when human calculation had probably flattered with many comfortable days yet to come on this side the grave.

Having had thy education in our Society and having spent a considerable part of thy time amongst valuable friends, I conclude thou wilt not be surprised at the care and concern, which I apprehend I ought, and hope in measure do feel for thy welfare; and from which arises the warm desire of

beholding thee in some particulars which I believe I need not enumerate, more consistent in thy conduct with the profession thou art making. I believe it would tend more to thy peace and comfort, than thou canst at present conceive, or than I can at present describe ; and though it might expose thee to the ridicule of the young and inconsiderate, yet thou wouldst be more respected by all those, under every denomination, whose judgment is worth regarding.

A religious life is not, nor can it be made compatible either with a state of worldly ease or sensual gratification. The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through *sufferings*, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps ; and he has forewarned us that following *Him* will subject us to various trials, unpleasant to the natural mind ; but he has assured us also, (and a blessed assurance his followers find it,) that he will enable us to endure them, and finally make us victorious over all opposition, if we cleave unto him in sincerity, and with full purpose of heart : but may we never forget, that if we forsake Him, he will forsake us ; and if we deny him, (which I take a conformity to the language, vain customs, and fashions, of this world to be,) he will deny us before His Father and the Holy Angels. A most awakening consideration ! and which I well remember in the early part of my life, when I was too much in the practice of

shunning the cross in these respects, has often pierced me through like a dart : and this mentioning of how it has been with myself leads me to recommend thy re-perusal of the last excellent epistle from the Yearly Meeting, which after affectionately addressing those young persons whose deviations from our principles had excited much concern, recommends them not to despise the counsel of experience, and especially of that experience which leads to distress, which I believe most, if not all, find the path of improper indulgence, undue liberty and disobedience to be, though they may not be willing to acknowledge it.

For the relief of my own mind, and from a sincere and disinterested desire for thy well being, both in this and in a better life, I submit these broken sentiments to thy consideration, hoping thou wilt understand my motive, and believe me to be

Thy truly affectionate friend,

J. H.

I was favoured with the following openings and illuminations, viz : that as *many words* of our own prevent us hearing distinctly the outward voice of others, so do the cogitations of the mind prevent our distinguishing those spiritual motions, and hearing that still small voice, by which our individual religious duties are discovered to us : therefore the necessity of *silence* in both cases.

As it is perfectly consistent with every divine attribute that there *should be*, so I verily believe there *is*, an immediate spiritual intercourse between the soul of man and its Creator ; by which communion his soul is introduced into unity with its divine source, and sympathy with its fellow creatures—is informed, chastised, or comforted ; suffers, or reigns, according as its state or the state of others may require.

It seems as if there was at times an exercise on behalf of others produced in the mind, which like the wind that bloweth when and where it listeth, cometh on, and goeth off, we scarcely know how ; and yet the sound of it is heard with sufficient clearness to warrant our moving under its influence in religious endeavours to promote the glory of our Creator and the spiritual good of mankind.

10th of 7th mo. 1809.

There appears a striking similarity between the disposition manifesting in many professing Christians at the present time, and that of the haughty Naaman, the Syrian ; who, when he heard the means prescribed by the prophet for the cure of his leprosy, was displeased, and went away saying, “ Behold, I thought he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper.

Are not Abana and Parpha, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?" Thus the learned of this world in the present day, are unwilling to adopt the means inculcated by our Saviour to obtain the true and saving knowledge that comes from above. Reason, or their own natural powers sit paramount with them; whence no doubt it is, that the various opinions and sects among mankind derive their origin; and is not this diversity of opinion a convincing proof that no agency short of the supernatural influence is competent to open to their view a right understanding of the mysteries of the new Gospel dispensation?

15th of 7th mo. 1809.

There are many ways by which we may be instructed; the knowledge likely to prove most beneficial is that gained by our own experience; the experience of other men may serve next to our own to teach us to beware of their errors and the consequences resulting from them. In the example of Hezekiah's vain display of his riches before the men of Babylon, we may be renewedly made sensible of the necessity of the constant watch whereby we may prevent any vain imagination from obtaining a place in our minds; for undoubtedly, if we foster a self esteem on account of what we are favoured to pos-

sess, whether spiritual or temporal, we are in danger of becoming totally divested of that state of conscious dependence, which ought always to accompany us ; in which case we shall require a fresh course of humiliation, before the mind is prepared to receive fresh supplies from the fountain of all good.

17th of 7th mo. 1809.

In the several transactions of the kings of Judah and Jerusalem, it is particularly observable, that if an individual concern is not maintained to be coming up agreeably to the dictates of truth in our minds, vain will be the influence of example. We see in the instances of Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, and his successor Jehoahaz, that the most abandoned character, though the immediate offspring of a righteous parent, is placed upon the throne committing all kinds of wickedness ; and *vice versa* in the case of Josiah, a son of the devotees of idolatry, his predecessors, Manasseh and Amon, who are represented as forsaking their views, and “doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord.”

8th mo. 2nd, 1809.

It occurred to me this morning whilst engaged in mental retirement and prostration of soul, before Him who scrutinizes not only our actions but our thoughts, and whose piercing eye divides as it

were between joints and marrow, and penetrates into the inmost recesses of our deceitful hearts, that to affect the use of high flown, and what are called learned expressions for the sake of displaying either our natural or acquired abilities, or to please the itching ears of men, is equally reprehensible with the use of gay clothing or sumptuous furniture, and is only another shape of pride and ostentation :—and of this fault, O my soul ! thou hast great need especially to beware.

Sitting at breakfast, my mind was bowed in thankfulness for the plentiful and comfortable table which Providence, in the riches of his bounty, enables me to spread for my dear children ; while thousands, of perhaps, far more worthy receivers, are not so amply provided for ;—which humbles me under a deep sense of the very inadequate returns I seem able to make, though I hope I feel some degree of that contrition of heart which He condescends not to despise.

Gedney, 13th of 8th mo. 1809.

DEAR B——

Though T. C. had no such instructions from me, yet I think I can discover his having mentioned my being poorly after I got home ; as he said thou kindly desirest to hear of me if there appeared occasion ; and as for my own sake, thou mightest rely

upon this, so I think it no less due to thy sympathetic feelings to inform thee of my being almost entirely relieved from the violent pain in my head, which I suppose T. C. might describe to thee.

I have just been to meeting, but feel myself very weak and languid; somewhat like a man exhausted by the violence of a storm, through which he has with difficulty struggled:—and to thee, my dear friend, I may say, that a storm has for many days, with but little intermission, lain heavily upon me; exercising the faculties both of body and mind to a degree, that considering my state, reminded me of a line of the poet, who describing the affecting situation of a poor maniac, says, “His heart has no comfort, his head has no rest.” These agitations of nature, these turnings and overturnings of both corporeal and intellectual powers, like the raging of the outward elements are very awful; as like them they remind of, and sometimes almost threaten, us with destruction:—and as they appear calculated, so, perhaps they are designed for the destroying of all remaining confidence in the flesh, and for establishing us more firmly upon that foundation which cannot be shaken, and against which the rain beats, and the wind bloweth in vain. That these storms are permitted by infinite and inscrutable wisdom, and are no less controlled by Almighty power, I cannot entertain a doubt; seeing that at times I have been mercifully enabled to adopt the

language of one formerly, "the voice of the Lord is mightier than the voice of many waters, yea, than the raging waves of the sea;" but though this has been my experience, and though I think I endeavour to encourage a disposition which ascribes every excellent attribute to the only source of perfection, and in the contemplation of that glorious Being who "holdeth the winds in his fists, and balanceth the clouds by his discretion," am ready to say, let Him dispose of me as He pleaseth, all is good that He doeth—yet, when afresh baptized into suffering, I am attended with many fears, lest after all I have known and passed through, my faith and patience, which in these seasons of deep trial, seem very small, should fail; and lest at the winding up of all things, I should be found unworthy, even of the lowest place in the kingdom, an admittance to which, as I have no claim, so I desire no greater extension of unbounded and adorable mercy than to receive.

I am at the writing of this in a calm and quiet situation of mind, and if any language I can utter is worth hearing, that wherein I would at present address myself and thee, is to trust more and more in the Lord, and less in ourselves, for wherein, alas! is man abstractedly considered, and all that properly appertains to him to be accounted of?

I remain thy very affectionate,

J. H.

Selby, 22nd of 2 mo. 1811.

Dear B—— and S——,

I seem inclined to tell you that, so far from even feeling *fatigued* by my late close exercise, my health I think gradually improves, and my satisfaction is considerable in being here, though of little apparent usefulness. I mention this to shew how unexpectedly and suddenly we are at times qualified to meet our difficulties, as I have had to observe with admiration, in some very trying circumstances, to which you are no strangers; and though I willingly admit that a *part* of this experience *may* proceed from a certain temperament of the mind, by which it can accommodate itself to different events, and may therefore be in this way *physically* accounted for; and while I am also desirous to avoid describing any thing *marvellous*, or of giving high names to myself or my experiences, yet I trust that you, my dear relations, will not charge me either with superstition or presumption, when I acknowledge myself inclined to attribute the *far greater part* of the qualification alluded to, as well as the many preservations and deliverances, both of body and mind, which have attended me all my life long, to the long suffering and continued mercy of my heavenly Father towards the most unworthy of his rational creatures; but why it has pleased Him thus to distinguish me by his mercy I cannot tell, unless it be to prepare

me for declaring upon the authority of having "tasted and seen," *that He is "Good"*—a God slow to anger and of great kindness—"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved;" but while I thus write, I feel desirous that none of my dear friends may ever "think of me more highly than they ought to think;" and perhaps there are not any of them who need this caution more than yourselves, as of your kindness I receive so many unmerited proofs. I would have you, and all who may view me religiously, to see me as I think I see myself, encompassed with very many infirmities and imperfections, so that if at times I am favoured with a *little* divine strength, it seems counter-balanced by *much* human weakness; and if a portion of wisdom superior to my own be at seasons vouchsafed, it is often a cause of mortifying abasement to me to discover how much of the "foolishness of man is still my companion;" but though constrained to view myself in this very humiliating light, I do not despair, but would rather consider this degradation in my own eyes to be necessary, in order to "hide pride from them," and that both myself and others may be instructed even by *my weakness* to put no confidence in the flesh; seeing that without the continued extension of providential care in the frequent replenishing of our souls with heavenly manna, it would soon appear that some

(perhaps many) of us, were not only weak, but *worthless*, and not only worthless, but *vile*.

3rd mo. 12th, 1812.

There are three things in which my nature is very prone unprofitably to indulge, but which I see must [at times] be almost entirely relinquished.

The *recollection* of the *past*—the *comprehension* of the *present*—and the anticipation of the *future*; the *first*, by the failure of memory, is nearly out of my power; the *second*, totally impracticable; and the *third*, being perhaps one of the greatest vanities on which the powers of the mind can be exhausted, is uncertain and beyond control.

“To mourn avails not, man is born to bear.”

London, 26th of 9th mo. 1814.

Dear B——,

I think G——, when about to give a dear friend and relative some account of his travels, sets out with telling him something like this—

“Where’er I go, whatever place I see,
My heart untravell’d still returns to thee.”

Now, though I am not about to compare myself to G——, either as to the extent of my perambulations, or the ability for describing them, yet I am unwilling to believe myself a whit behind him

in the affectionate remembrance of my friend, even of that friend whom I now address ; yes, my dear B——, I find that neither time, place, nor circumstances, can prevent my heart often returning towards thee, *always* with *love*, *sometimes* with *sympathy*, under thy trials of whatever nature they may be; for, as between two of the most precious promises of the Gospel, “ peace or an hundredfold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting,” are introduced the expressions, “ with persecutions also,” and as it is said, “ whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,” so I cannot suppose, that notwithstanding the appearance of outward comfort which surrounds thee, thou art exempt from the common lot, nor do I believe it.

On the word “persecutions,” in the text alluded to, we may observe, that though persecution by fire and sword, has for the present ceased in this favoured country, yet there remains the *persecution* of the *tongue* and of the *pen* ; and should we escape *these*, I believe it is quite consistent with the nature of our situation here, that it should be attended with *suffering* in some shape or other, to try our *faith* and *patience*, to *wean* us from *this* world, and prepare us for a *better*. Perhaps thou wilt not think me a mere *prattler* on this interesting subject, knowing as thou dost that I have tasted the bitter cup; and this, I may assure thee, has been handed me in a greater variety of forms than thou couldst

almost believe were I to tell it thee; but on some of them my lips will be, I trust, for ever sealed.

By a letter from my son, I am informed of thy, and thy daughter's prevention from being at the monthly meeting, and of the dangerous accident that occasioned it, for which, on different accounts, I have felt concerned. The subject has, however, as most others have, if we do but look for it, a bright side; and this, in the present instance, has appeared to me, doubtless to thee also, in the providential favour of your preservation from further injury than was sustained, which I understand was small, compared with what might reasonably have been expected. May this circumstance, therefore, my dear B——, afresh excite each of us to trust in the Lord, and to commit ourselves and our all, (life not excepted) to his holy care and keeping, who thus preserveth, as in the hollow of his hand, those who confide in Him, when they can do nothing for themselves. Armed, therefore, with this confidence, and encouraged by the remembrance of former preservations, mayest thou hold thyself in constant readiness to set off again to our meetings for discipline, distant as they are, as the times come round for holding them; for I am free to say, that considering the importance of our example, there are not many things I dread for myself, or for thee, more than our outliving an inclination or ability to give at least this proof of our

love to the Lord's cause, and of our zeal in the Christian warfare. — Believe me, *never more* thy truly affectionate.

J. H.

Selby, 1st of 9th mo. 1827.

THE sentiments expressed in thy letter, both as respects our long standing, private friendship, and thy brotherly sympathy and satisfaction with my feeble endeavours, in the way of apprehended religious duty, were truly acceptable and encouraging to me.

For, as I suppose we *both* know what it is to have our seasons of *depression* as well as of *comfort*, I have believed that it may be right for us, like some of *old*, who are said to have “feared the Lord,” sometimes to “speak to each other,” as we are informed was their practice, and this doubtless for their mutual strength and edification, in that which our admired poet, Cowper, calls “the race divine.” I have thought too, that it may be well for such friends as these, to commune not merely with the *lip*, but occasionally with the *pen* also, as *written* records of our thoughts and feelings may not only refresh the failing memory, but may survive even that separation which awaits the most intimate human connexions, and by which all power of further communication, either by word or writing,

is cut off. It may then be a pleasant, perhaps a profitable thing, to fix the eye of widowed friendship, on the frail memorials of times and circumstances long gone by, and which, but for such a medium, could not be retraced, but which it may be both a consolation and encouragement thus to be enabled to review, in the well known characters of a departed hand.

2nd mo. 23rd, 1823.

On a view of the weakness and corruption of human nature abstractedly considered, my poor mind has at seasons been brought to the borders of despair, so that I have even been almost discouraged from lifting up either my eyes or my hands towards heaven, by a fear of hypocrisy, and under the solemn consideration that the very thoughts of the wicked are declared to be abomination to the Lord ; yet, when by this humbling process I have become so far reduced as to prostrate myself at the footstool of divine mercy, as a helpless sinner, my plea though oft times a silent one, has not been *rejected by the sinner's friend*. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Who has had compassion on me, and blessed be His holy name for ever ; has raised the beggar from the dunghill, and permitted me again to *live* in his sight. And let not such an expe-

rience as this appear *strange* to the reader, seeing “no man can keep alive (unto God) his own soul.”

As the doctrine of immediate revelation is the highest of all religious professions, so the experience of the thing itself is the greatest of all spiritual attainments, which we are capable of receiving and enjoying in the present life; being nothing short of communion with our heavenly Father, through His Son Christ Jesus, by the agency of the unspeakable gift of the Holy Spirit, placed in the secret of every heart, who, although “He inhabiteth eternity and His name is Holy,” thus condescends to look down upon the humble and contrite hearted, and after this manner to dwell with them.

4th mo. 15th, 1828.

As the “bullock unaccustomed to the yoke,” is generally impatient at its being laid upon him, so man under the early visitations of affliction, or the first restraints of the cross, is uneasy at their weight, and reluctant to bear them; resistance however proving vain, and only increasing the suffering, submission is at length resorted to as affording the only prospect of relief; and well it is for us when we are thus wise, as *death* or *distraction* might be expected to follow an unavailing and continued opposition, “who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?” and when this *submission*,

(another name for *resignation*,) is accompanied by prayer, then our trouble, whatsoever be its nature, becomes transformed into the “light and easy yoke” of “Christ Jesus our Lord.” Through his assistance vouchsafed to our humble petitions, we learn to bear the “burden” of it cheerfully. We go forth to the portion of labour assigned us with willingness, or bend under our secret sorrows, if these be our lot, without repining. Blessed and happy experience !

An aged Israelite wanders amongst the ruins of Jerusalem—he arrives at a tomb—reclines upon it—and records in falling tears the sad history of her departed glory, with the causes of its decline.

Reader ! can'st thou perceive no resemblance ?

“ I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.”

The Lord expects his servants to labour in their respective callings, and to perform their required duties, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, with as much industry and diligence as if the *success* of their endeavours was at their own command ; but this success is, notwithstanding, a part of his own prerogative, which he reserves to himself. We must therefore strive as if every thing depended on ourselves, yet we should also assuredly believe that God only can “give the increase.”

So, equally true it is, that although man may “build and watch” a city, it is the Lord only who can keep and preserve it from innumerable perils.

11th mo. 1833.

A poor irresolute and fallen creature is desirous of obtaining a crown immortal, by “fighting the good fight of Faith,” against those potent enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The *world* in all its seductive and terrific vicissitudes—the *flesh* in its corruption—and the *devil* in the plenitude of his malevolence and power.

O merciful and omnipotent Lord God! be pleased to assist a trembling sinner in this unequal warfare, or the victory can never be obtained! but through thy aid in Christ Jesus, we may be made “more than conquerors.” With Thee “all things are possible,” and thy strength is “made perfect” in human weakness—As *without* Thee, nothing that is truly good can prosper, so *against* Thy holy will and power nothing that is evil, shall ever be able to prevail!

Of all the weights and burdens which the Christian traveller has to bear in his pilgrimage through this world, perhaps on a due estimate none will be found to be heavier than himself, nor anything which in the retrospect oppresses him with greater sorrow and a deeper humiliation, than the sense of his own unworthiness; a word of no lofty sound, yet when con-

templated in its *causes*, its *effects*, and its *associations*, of very comprehensive and significant import. I am aware, that both in speaking and writing, I may often seem to take a low view of human nature and of religious society, but when I consider the description of the heart of man, as given by Him who best knew it; when I contemplate the beatitudes and the woes of the Gospel, pronounced by the same high authority; or when I turn from these and fix my attention on the states to which the precious promises, and awful threatenings of the Old Testament Scriptures were addressed, without adverting to my own experience, I find myself justified in the conclusion, that *pride* was not made for man, but that *humility* was; and in all stations and circumstances into which he can possibly be brought, especially becomes his precarious and dependent condition.

10th mo. 18th, 1834.

The noble faculty of human reason or the understanding of man, abstractedly considered, capable of improvement as it confessedly is, still has its boundaries and limitations; and it is of much importance to ascertain, as far as possible, what these limits are, as it is no little disparagement to reason, and often attended with danger both to ourselves

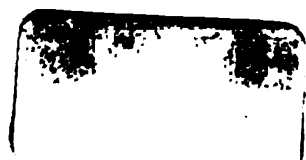
and others, to apply it to those objects to which it is incompetent.

It is either on doubtful questions, ambiguous expressions, or certain abstruse propositions of science, falsely so called, that the sophist and the infidel lay the foundation of that structure, which they proudly as vainly imagine shall reach up to heaven, but which however specious and fair in appearance, yet being built on the "sand," will neither be able to withstand the shock of the tempest, nor endure the penetrating effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness," before these every Babel must fall, and those who build it will be confounded, even as Dagon of old fell prostrate before the ark of the Lord !

O most gracious God ! be pleased for thy great Name's sake—thy dear Son's sake—and my immortal soul's sake, to *forgive* the " manifold" infirmities of a vain and roving imagination—*pardon*, I humbly and reverently pray Thee, the mighty sins of my youth, by actual transgression—and if it be not too much, to implore even of thy *infinite mercy*—love me freely ! When I groan the " unspeakable groan," incline thine ear to hear. When I shed (alas how seldom !) the tear of contrition, put it into " thy bottle ;" and if ever at thy command, and by the assistance of thy Grace, I have performed the least work of Faith and Obe-

dience, let it be recorded in thy "book of remembrance;" that thus recommended, and through the intercession of thy appointed mediator, I may finally be emboldened to render up my account with humble confidence, and trembling joy.

THE END.



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